

# Embassy of Japan

## Tonga

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **Japan's Sports Diplomacy Enhancement extends support to Tonga**

On the 12th February 2025, the Embassy of Japan in Tonga handed over a donation of Rugby equipment on behalf of the Japan Rugby Football Union, to the Tonga Rugby Union. This donation included 150 rugby balls, 140 markers, 4 tackle bags and other items.

H.E. Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga shared that the initiative was made by individual sports people of Japan, whose efforts are supported by the Government of Japan through its overseas missions. "Rugby has played an important role in promoting cultural and people-to-people exchange between the two countries, beyond the framework of sport, and it is no exaggeration to say that it has become a form of diplomacy through rugby exchanges," stated the Ambassador.

He highlighted that, Tongan rugby players in Japan make up the largest foreign majority in Japan's rugby, and "in fact, Tonga is the country that has produced the largest number of Japanese national rugby team players or Brave Blossoms."

Mr. 'Aisea 'Aholeilei, Chief Executive Officer of the Tonga Rugby Union extended his profound gratitude to the Japan Rugby Football Union, as well as the people of Japan for their generous donation. Referring to the support by the Government of Japan for the construction of the TRU's training facility, which was signed on the 17th January 2025.

"Japan plays a key role in Tonga's rugby development, said Mr. 'Aholeilei with assurance that the equipment will be utilized effective and efficient manner to support the development of future rugby players who will bridge the rugby exchanges between Japan and Tonga.

Through this initiative, 11 countries this year were selected as recipients included the Tonga Rugby Union, of Tonga.

END.

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Photos:



H.E. Mr. INAGAKI Hisao and Mr. 'Aisea 'Aholelei with the donated rugby equipment from Japan's Rugby Football Union, to Tonga Rugby Union., Wednesday 12 February 2025.



Donated Rugby Equipment from the Japan Football Rugby Union.



Young Rugby players who will use the Equipment

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